



**U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement**

July 19, 2006

# News Release

**British citizen charged with conspiring to provide material support to terrorists**  
**-- Indictment stems from lengthy probe by ICE, FBI and other agencies --**

NEW HAVEN, CT –Kevin J. O’Connor, United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut, today announced that a federal grand jury sitting in Bridgeport, Connecticut, has returned a three-count Indictment charging **SYED TALHA AHSAN**, age 26 (DOB 09/21/79), of London, England, with participating in a conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists; providing, and aiding and abetting others in providing, material support to terrorists, and participating in a conspiracy to kill, maim or injure persons or damage property in a foreign country.

At the request of the U.S. Government, AHSAN was arrested earlier today at his residence in London by British law enforcement authorities. Subsequent to his arrest, the Indictment, which was returned on June 28, 2006, was ordered unsealed by United States Magistrate Judge Holly B. Fitzsimmons in Bridgeport.

Following his arrest, AHSAN appeared before a magistrate court in London, at which time he was ordered detained pending a bail hearing scheduled for next Wednesday, July 26, in the magistrate court in London. The court also noted, pursuant to the usual procedures, that a formal package from the U.S. Government seeking AHSAN’s extradition to the United States would be due within sixty days, or on or before September 22, 2006. To that end, an official extradition request from the U.S. Government will be transmitted in due course to British authorities, and is expected to be served upon AHSAN shortly.

“These charges are the result of several years of investigative work by ICE and FBI agents in New Haven, NCIS agents, and several additional law enforcement partners here in the United States and overseas,” U.S. Attorney O’Connor stated. “This investigation is ongoing.”

The Indictment alleges that, from approximately 1997 through at least August 2004, AHSAN, Babar Ahmad, an organization called *Azzam Publications* and others conspired to provide material support and resources to persons engaged in acts of terrorism through the creation and use of various internet web sites, e-mail communications, and other means.

The material support and resources consisted of expert advice and assistance, communications equipment, military items, currency, monetary instruments, financial services, and personnel, all of which were designed to recruit for and assist the Taliban and the Chechen Mujahideen, and to raise funds for terrorist activities in Afghanistan, Chechnya and other places. It is alleged that members of the conspiracy maintained accounts at a number of Internet Service Providers (“ISPs”) and web hosting companies in the United States, including

one headquartered in Connecticut. Babar Ahmad and *Azzam Publications* were previously charged by Indictment in the District of Connecticut in October 2004.

Among other things, the Indictment against AHSAN alleges that, in or about April 2001, AHSAN possessed, accessed, modified and re-saved an electronic document containing then-classified United States Navy plans of a U.S. Naval Battle Group operating in the Straits of Hormuz. The document is alleged to have set forth details regarding the composition, mission and capabilities of the various ships within the battle group and discussed the Naval Group's vulnerabilities to terrorist attack.

It is alleged that, in or about July 2001, a member of the conspiracy, through e-mail accounts associated with *Azzam Publications*, communicated with a U.S. Naval enlistee who was sympathetic to the views expressed on the *Azzam* family of web sites and referred to the October 2000 attack on the *U.S.S. Cole* as a "martyrdom operation." The e-mail encouraged the enlistee to "keep up the psychological warfare [sic]."

The Indictment further alleges that, in or about December 2003, Babar Ahmad was found in the possession of the electronic document containing the previously classified U.S. Navy plans and the Battle Group's vulnerabilities to terrorist attack.

U.S. Attorney O'Connor indicated that the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Connecticut looks forward to working with law enforcement authorities in the United Kingdom in pursuing AHSAN's extradition to the District of Connecticut to face the pending charges. If extradited and convicted of the charges, AHSAN faces a maximum term of imprisonment of life. U.S. Attorney O'Connor stressed that the indictment is only a charge and not evidence of guilt. The defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it is the Government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

This case is being investigated by a Task Force in Connecticut consisting of Special Agents of the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), law enforcement agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Joint Terrorism Task Force, the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigation Division, the IRS-CI Electronic Crimes Program, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service.

U.S. Attorney O'Connor praised the substantial efforts of law enforcement authorities from the Metropolitan Police Service's Anti-Terrorist Branch and the Extradition and International Assistance Unit, both within New Scotland Yard, whose efforts and assistance have been essential in the investigation in this case.

The case is being prosecuted by a team of federal prosecutors including Assistant United States Attorneys John Danaher, William Nardini and Stephen Reynolds from the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Connecticut; Special Assistant United States Attorney Mark G. Califano from the District of Connecticut; Trial Attorney Andrew Levchuk from the Computer Crimes and Intellectual Property Section of the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, and Trial Attorney Alexis Collins from the Counter-Terrorism Section of the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21<sup>st</sup> century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*